cases involving complex equipment, the process takes additional time to conduct technical evaluation, staff evaluation and trials where required.

The procedure is constantly reviewed by the Government with a view to modifying and streamlining the procedure as also to address any practical difficulty which the services may face in the acquisition of required defence equipment.

Charges of rape and murder against army personnel

2346. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the charges of rape and murder against army personnels, if so, how many rape cases and how many murder cases have been registered against army personnels during last two years;

(b) whether such culprits have been punished; if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to put a stop to such practices?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) During the last two years 17 cases relating to the charge of rape and 10 cases relating to the charge of murder were reported against the army personnel.

(b) In 1 case of rape and in 5 cases of murder, where guilt has been established, the army personnel have been awarded punishment. In the remaining cases, the charges are either under investigation/trial or the charges have been proved to be false/frivolous.

(c) All the allegations against army personnel are inquired into promptly. Wherever a crime is established/proved, stern action is taken against the guilty personnel to curb such acts. Further, the punishment awarded is given requisite publicity which acts as a deterrent for others.

Reservation benefits to ex-servicemen

2347. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the name of "horizontal reservation" a majority of ex-servicemen are deprived of taking advantage of reservations; and

(b) if so, what steps will be taken to remedy this grossly unfair and discriminatory situation?